

SENATE FINANCE & CLAIMSExhibit No. 5 Page 1 of 2Date 3-6-15Bill No. House Bill 47 HB 47Youth Crisis Project

March 4, 2015

To Whom It May Concern,

We are writing today in support of continuing crisis youth services and the Youth Crisis Diversion Project. In March of 2014, one month after our son, Aidan, was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes, our family and Aidan found ourselves in crisis. Aidan was refusing to take his insulin, threatening run-away, and, most frightening of all, said he would "rather be dead than live with diabetes." As the crisis peaked one Saturday, we ended up in the emergency room with nowhere else to go. The recommendation of the emergency room was for Aidan to be sent to Shodair for inpatient treatment as he was too young to use Providence here in Missoula. Luckily, we had an excellent hospital social worker who instead advocated for Aidan to be released home to us, pending the start of services with the Youth Crisis Diversion Project. With the Youth Crisis Diversion Project number in hand, Aidan was able to come home.

Over the next 30 days, our family worked with Sandy Cummins, our Youth Crisis Diversion Project Peer to Peer/Facilitator. The services and support we received helped to stabilize Aidan while allowing him to remain in our home, the least restrictive environment. Without Sandy and the Youth Crisis Diversion Project, our ability to meet our son's and family's needs would have been difficult, if not impossible. We have no doubt that without the services we received, including the placement with long-term counseling, our family and Aidan may have been left with no alternative, but hospitalization in our time of crisis. Instead, Aidan was

able to start on his path to better mental health at home with parents who love him and we were able to learn how to best support him.

The Youth Crisis Diversion Project saved our son and our family from the heartache of an unnecessary separation at a time of crisis. Our hope in writing to you is that the Youth Crisis Diversion Project and other youth crisis services will continue to be supported, granting families the opportunity to heal together.

Respectfully,

Tovah and Leo Foss

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